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INAUGURAL DISCOURSE

OF

HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq., M. P.,

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OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 1825.

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TO

THE VERY REVEREND THE PRINCIPAL,

THE PROFESSORS,

AND THE STUDENTS,

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

I beg leave to inscribe this Discourse to you, in token of my great respect. Although the opinions which it sets forth are the result of mature deliberation, yet, as it was written during the business of the Northern Circuit, it will, I fear, as far as regards the composition, not be deemed very fit to appear before the world. Nevertheless, I have yielded a somewhat reluctant assent to the request of many of your number, who were of opinion that its publication would prove beneficial.

H. BROUGHAM, R.

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INAUGURAL DISCOURSE.

It now becomes me to return my very sincere and respectful thanks for the kindness which has placed me in a chair, filled at former times by so many great men, whose names might well make any comparison formidable to a far more worthy successor.

While I desire you to accept this unexaggerated expression of gratitude, I am anxious to address you rather in the form which I now adopt, than in the more usual one of an unpremeditated discourse. I shall thus at least prove that the remarks, which I deem it my duty to make, are the fruit of mature reflection, and that I am unwilling to discharge an important office in a perfunctory manner.

I feel very sensibly, that if I shall now urge you by general exhortations, to be instant in the pursuit of the learning, which, in all its branches, flourishes under the kindly shelter of these roofs, I may weary you with the unprofitable repetition of a thrice told tale ; and if I presume to offer my advice touching the conduct of your studies, I may seem to trespass upon the province of those venerable persons, under whose care you have the singular happiness to be placed. But I would nevertheless expose myself to either charge, for the sake of joining my voice with theirs, in anxiously intreating you to believe how incomparably the present season is verily and indeed the most precious of your whole lives. It is not the less true, because it has been oftentimes said, that the period of youth is by far the best fitted for the improvement of the mind, and the retirement of a college almost exclusively adapted to much study. At your enviable age, every thing has the lively interest of novelty and freshness ; attention is perpetually sharpened by curiosity ; and the memory is tenacious of the deep

impressions it thus receives, to a degree unknown in after life ; while the distracting cares of the world, or its beguiling pleasures, cross not the threshold of these calm retreats ; its distant noise and bustle are faintly heard, making the shelter you enjoy more grateful ; and the struggles of anxious mortals embarked upon that troublous sea, are viewed from an eminence, the security of which is rendered more sweet by the prospect of the scene below. Yet a little while, and you too will be plunged into those waters of bitterness ; and will cast an eye of regret, as now I do, upon the peaceful regions you have quitted for ever. Such is your lot as members of society ; but it will be your own fault if you look back on this place with repentance or with shame ; and be well assured that, whatever time—ay, every hour—you squander here on unprofitable idling, will then rise up against you, and be paid for by years of bitter but unavailing regrets. Study then, I beseech you, so to store your minds with the exquisite learning of former ages, that you may always possess within your-

selves sources of rational and refined enjoyment, which will enable you to set at nought the grosser pleasures of sense, whereof other men are slaves ; and so imbue yourselves with the sound philosophy of later days, forming yourselves to the virtuous habits which are its legitimate offspring, that you may walk unhurt through the trials which await you, and may look down upon the ignorance and error that surround you, not with lofty and supercilious contempt, as the sages of old times, but with the vehement desire of enlightening those who wander in darkness, and who are by so much the more endeared to us by how much they want our assistance.

Assuming the improvement of his own mind and of the lot of his fellow-creatures to be the great end of every man's existence, who is removed above the care of providing for his sustenance, and to be the indispensable duty of every man, as far as his own immediate wants leave him any portion of time unemployed, our attention is naturally directed to the means by which so great

and urgent a work may best be performed ; and as in the limited time allotted to this discourse, I cannot hope to occupy more than a small portion of so wide a field, I shall confine myself to two subjects, or rather to a few observations upon two subjects, both of them appropriate to this place, but either of them affording ample materials for an entire course of Lectures—the Study of the Rhetorical Art, by which useful truths are promulgated with effect, and the Purposes to which a Proficiency in this art should be made subservient.

It is an extremely common error among young persons, impatient of academical discipline, to turn from the painful study of ancient, and particularly of Attic composition, and solace themselves with works rendered easy by the familiarity of their own tongue. They plausibly contend, that as powerful or captivating diction in a pure English style is, after all, the attainment they are in search of, the study of the best English models affords the shortest road to this point;

and even admitting the ancient examples to have been the great fountains from which all eloquence is drawn, they would rather profit, as it were, by the classical labours of their English predecessors, than toil over the same path themselves. In a word, they would treat the perishable results of those labours as the standard, and give themselves no care about the immortal originals. This argument, the thin covering which indolence weaves for herself, would speedily sink all the fine arts into barrenness and insignificance. Why, according to such reasoners, should a sculptor or painter encounter the toil of a journey to Athens or to Rome? Far better work at home, and profit by the labour of those who have resorted to the Vatican and the Parthenon, and founded an English school, adapted to the taste of our own country. Be you assured that the works of the English chisel fall not more short of the wonders of the Acropolis than the best productions of modern pens fall short of the chaste, finished, nervous, and overwhelming compositions of them that “resistless ful-

mined over Greece." Be equally sure that, with hardly any exception, the great things of poetry and of eloquence have been done by men who cultivated the mighty exemplars of Athenian genius with daily and with nightly devotion. Among poets there is hardly an exception to this rule, unless may be so deemed Shakspeare, an exception to all rules, and Dante, familiar as a contemporary with the works of Roman art, composed in his mother tongue, having taken, not so much for his guide as for his "master," Virgil, himself almost a translator from the Greeks. But among orators I know of none among the Romans, and scarce any in our own times. Cicero honoured the Greek masters with such singular observance, that he not only repaired to Athens for the sake of finishing his rhetorical education, but afterwards continued to practise the art of declaiming in Greek ; and although he afterward fell into a less pure manner through the corrupt blandishments of the Asian taste, yet do we find him ever prone to extol the noble perfections of his first masters, as something

placed beyond the reach of all imitation. Nay, at a mature period of his life, he occupied himself in translating the greater orations of the Greeks, which composed almost exclusively his treatise, “*De optimo genere oratoris* ;” as if to write a discourse on oratorical perfection, were merely to present the reader with the two immortal speeches upon the Crown. Sometimes we find him imitating, even to a literal version, the beauties of those divine originals,—as the beautiful passage of Æschines, in the Timarchus, upon the torments of the guilty, which the Roman orator has twice made use of, almost word for word ; once in the oration for Sextus Roscius, the earliest he delivered, and again in a more mature effort of his genius, the oration against L. Piso.*

* Μὴ γὰρ οἶσθε, τὰς τῶν ἀδικημάτων ἀρχὰς ἀπὸ θιῶν, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπων ἀσιλγίας γίνεσθαι· μηδὲ τοὺς ἡσιβηκότας, καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαις, Ποινὰς ἐλαύνειν καὶ κολάζειν θάσιν ἡμμένοις· ἀλλ’ αἱ προπετιῖς τοῦ σώματος ἡδοναὶ καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἱκανὸν ἡγιῆσθαι· ταῦτα πληροῖ τὰ ληστήρια — ταῦτ’ εἰς τὸν ἱπακτροκίλητα ἐμβιβάζει· ταῦτά ἐστιν ἑκάστω Ποινῇ — ταῦτα παρακιλύεται τοῖς νέοις, κ. τ. λ.—Αἰσχίν. κατὰ Τιμάρχου.

Nolite enim putare quemadmodum in fabulis sæpenumero videatis

I have dwelt the rather upon the authority of M. Tullius, because it enables us at once to answer the question, Whether a study of the Roman orators be not sufficient for refining the taste? If the Greeks were the models of an excellence which the first of Roman orators never attained, although ever aspiring after it—nay, if so far from being satisfied with his own success, he even in those his masters found something which his ears desiderated—(ita avidæ et capaces ut

eos qui aliquid impie scelestæque commiserint, agitari et perterrerî Furiarum tædis ardentibus. Sua quemque fraus et suus terror maximè vexat ; suum quemque scelus agitat amentîæque afficit ; suæ malæ cogitationes conscientîæque animi terrent. Hæ sunt impiis assiduæ domesticæque Furîæ ; quæ dies noctesque parentum pœpas à consceleratissimis filiis repetant.—(*Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino.*)

Nolite enim putare, ut in scenâ videtis, homines consceleratos impulsu deorum terreri Furiarum tædis ardentibus. Sua quemque fraus — suum facinus — suum scelus — sua audacia, de sanitate ac mente deturbat. Hæ sunt impiorum Furîæ — hæ flammæ — hæ faces.—(*In Luc. Calp. Pisonem.*)

The great improvement in Cicero's taste between the first and the second of these compositions is manifest, and his closer adherence to the original. He introduces the same idea, and in very similar language, in the Treatise *De Legg. Lib. 1.*

semper aliquid immensum infinitumque desiderent. Orator. 29.)—he either fell short while copying them, or he failed by diverting his worship to the false gods of the Asian school. In the one case, were we to rest satisfied with studying the Roman, we should only be imitating the imperfect copy, instead of the pure original—like him who should endeavour to catch a glimpse of some beauty by her reflection in a glass, that weakened her tints, if it did not distort her features. In the other case, we should not be imitating the same, but some less perfect original, and looking at the wrong beauty ;—not her whose chaste and simple attractions commanded the adoration of all Greece, but some garish damsel from Rhodes or Chios, just brilliant and languishing enough to captivate the less pure taste of half civilized Rome.

But there are other reasons too weighty to be passed over, which justify the same decided preference. Not to mention the incomparable beauty and power of the Greek language, the

study of which alone affords the means of enriching our own, the compositions of Cicero, exquisite as they are for beauty of diction, often remarkable for ingenious argument and brilliant wit, not seldom excelling in deep pathos, are nevertheless so extremely rhetorical, fashioned by an art so little concealed, and sacrificing the subject to a display of the speaker's powers, admirable as those are, that nothing can be less adapted to the genius of modern elocution, which requires a constant and almost exclusive attention to the business in hand. In all his orations which were spoken (for, singular as it may seem, the remark applies less to those which were only written, as all the Verrine, except the first, all the Philippics, except the first and ninth, and the Pro Milone,) hardly two pages can be found which a modern assembly would bear. Some admirable arguments on evidence, and the credit of witnesses, might be urged to a jury ;* several passages, given by him on the me-

* There is a singular example of this in the remarks on the evidence and cross-examination in the oration for L. Flaccus, pointed

rits of the case, and in defence against the charge, might be spoken in mitigation of punishment after a conviction or confession of guilt ; but whether we regard the political or forensic orations, the style, both in respect of the reasoning and the ornaments, is wholly unfit for the more severe and less trifling nature of modern affairs in the senate or at the bar. Now, it is altogether otherwise with the Greek masters : Changing a few phrases, which the difference of religion and of manners might render objectionable,—moderating, in some degree, the virulence of invective, especially against private character, to suit the chivalrous courtesy of modern hostility,—there is hardly one of the political or forensic orations of the Greeks that might not be delivered in simi-

out to me by my friend Mr. Scarlett, the mention of whose name affords an illustration of my argument, for, as a more consummate master of the forensic art in all its branches never lived, so no man is more conversant with the works of his predecessors in ancient times. Lord Erskine, too, perhaps the first of judicial orators, ancient or modern, had well studied the noble remains of the classic age.

lar circumstances before our senate or tribunals ; while their funeral and other panegyrical discourses are much less inflated and unsubstantial than those of the most approved masters of the Epideictic style, the French preachers and Academicians. Whence this difference between the masterpieces of Greek and Roman eloquence ? Whence but from the rigid steadiness with which the Greek orator keeps the object of all eloquence perpetually in view, never speaking for mere speaking's sake ;—while the Latin rhetorician, *ingenii sui nimium amator*, and, as though he deemed his occupation a trial of skill, or display of accomplishments, seems ever and anon to lose sight of the subject matter in the attempt to illustrate and adorn it ; and pours forth passages sweet indeed, but unprofitable—fitted to tickle the ear, without reaching the heart. Where in all the orations of Cicero, or of him who almost equals him, Livy, *miræ facundiæ homo*, (Quinct.) shall we find any thing like those thick successions of short questions, in which Demosthenes oftentimes forges, as it were, with a

few rapidly following strokes, the whole massive chain of his argument ;—as, in the Chersonese, *Εἰ δ' ἅπαξ διαφθαρήσεται καὶ διαλυθήσεται, τί ποιήσομεν, ἂν ἐπὶ Χερρόνησον ἴη ; κρινοῦμεν Διοπείθην ; νῆ Δία. Καὶ τί τὰ πράγματα ἔσται βελτίω ; ἀλλ' ἐνθένδε βοηθήσομεν αὐτοῖς ; ἂν δ' ὑπὸ τῶν πνευμάτων μὴ δυνάμεθα ; ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί' οὐχ ἥξει. καὶ τίς ἐγγυητής ἐστι τούτου ;—* or, comprising all of a long narrative that suits his argument in a single sentence, presenting a lengthened series of events at a single glance,—as in the *Παραπρεσβεία* :—*Πέντε γὰρ γεγονόνασιν ἡμέραι μόναι, ἐν αἷς — οὗτος ἀπήγγειλε τὰ ψευδῆ — ὑμεῖς ἐπιστεύσατε, — οἱ Φωκεῖς ἐπύθοντο — ἐνέδωκαν ἑαυτοὺς — ἀπώλοντο.*

But though the more business-like manner of modern debate approaches much nearer the style of the Greek than the Latin compositions, it must be admitted that it falls short of the great originals in the closeness, and, as it were, density of the argument ; in the habitual sacrifice of all ornament to use, or rather in the constant union of the two ; so that, while a modern orator too frequent-

ly has his speech parcelled out in compartments, one devoted to argument, another to declamation, a third to mere ornament, as if he should say, Now your reason shall be convinced ; now I am going to rouse your passions ; and now you shall see how I can amuse your fancy—the more vigorous ancient argued in declaiming, and made his very boldest figures subservient to, or rather an integral part of his reasoning. The most figurative and highly wrought passage in all antiquity is the famous oath in Demosthenes, yet, in the most pathetic part of it, and when he seems to have left the furthest behind him the immediate subject of his speech, led away by the prodigious interest of the recollections he has excited ; when he is naming the very tombs where the heroes of Marathon lie buried, he instantly, not abruptly, but by a most felicitous and easy transition, returns into the midst of the main argument of his whole defence—that the merits of public servants, not the success of their councils, should be the measure of the public gratitude towards them—a position that runs through the whole speech,

and to which he makes the funeral honours bestowed alike on all the heroes, serve as a striking and appropriate support. With the same ease does Virgil manage his celebrated transition in the *Georgics* ; where, in the midst of the Thracian war, and while at an immeasurable distance from agricultural topics, the magician strikes the ground on the field of battle, where helmets are buried, and suddenly raises before us the lonely husbandman, in a remote age, peacefully tilling its soil, and driving his plough among the rusty armour and mouldering remains of the warrior.*

But if a further reason is required for giving the preference to the Greek orators, we may find it in the greater diversity and importance of the subjects upon which their speeches were delivered. Beside the number of admirable orations and of written arguments upon causes merely forensic, we have every subject of public policy, all the great affairs of state successively

* *Georg.* I. 493.

forming the topics of discussion. Compare them with Cicero in this particular, and the contrast is striking. His finest oration for matter and diction together is in defence of an individual charged with murder, and there is nothing in the case to give it a public interest, except that the parties were of opposite factions in the state, and the deceased a personal as well as political adversary of the speaker. His most exquisite performance in point of diction, perhaps the most perfect prose composition in the language, was addressed to one man, in palliation of another's having borne arms against him in a war with a personal rival. Even the Catilinarians, his most splendid declamations, are principally denunciations of a single conspirator; the Philippics, his most brilliant invectives, abuse of a profligate leader; and the Verrine orations, charges against an individual governor. Many, indeed almost all the subjects of his speeches, rise to the rank of what the French term *Causes celebres*; but they seldom rise higher.* Of Demosthenes,

* The cause of this difference between the Greek and Roman

on the other hand, we have not only many arguments upon cases strictly private, and relating

Orators has been so strikingly described by a learned friend of mine, in the following note upon the above passage, that the celebrity of his name, were I at liberty to mention it, is not required to attract the reader's notice. "In Athens," says he, "an incessant struggle for independence, for power, or for liberty, could not fail to rouse the genius of every citizen—to force the highest talent to the highest station—to animate her councils with a holy zeal—and to afford to her orators all that, according to the profoundest writers of antiquity, is necessary to the sublimest strains of eloquence. "*Magna eloquentia sicut flamma materia alitur, a motibus excitatur, urendo clarescit.*" Hers were not the holiday contests of men who sought to dazzle by the splendour of their diction, the grace of their delivery, the propriety and richness of their imagery. Her debates were on the most serious business which can agitate men—the preservation of national liberty, honour, independence, and glory. The gifts of genius and the perfection of art shed, indeed, a lustre upon the most vigorous exertions of her orators—but the object of their thunders was to stir the energies of the men of Athens, and to make tyrants tremble, or rivals despair. Rome, on the other hand, mistress of the world, at the time when she was most distinguished by genius and eloquence, owned no superior, hated no rival, dreaded no equal. Nations sought her protection, kings bowed before her majesty, the bosom of her sole dominion was disturbed by no struggle for national power, no alarm of foreign danger. While she maintained the authority of her laws

to pecuniary matters, (those generally called the 'Ἰδιωτικοί) and many upon interesting subjects,

over the civilized earth, and embraced under the flattering name of allies those who could no longer resist her arms, the revolt of a barbarian king, or the contests of bordering nations with each other, prolonged only till she had decided between them, served to amuse her citizens or her senate, without affecting their tranquillity. Her government, though essentially free, was not so popular as the Athenian. The severity of her discipline, and the gravity of her manners disposed her citizens less to those sudden and powerful emotions which both excited and followed the efforts of the Greek orators. It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude, that the character of Roman eloquence would be distinguished more by art than by passion, by science than by nature. The divisions and animosities of party, no doubt, would operate, and did operate with their accustomed force. But these are not like the generous flame which animates a whole nation to defend its liberty or its honour. The discussion of a law upon which the national safety could not depend, the question whether this or that general should take the command of an army, whether this or that province should be allotted to a particular minister, whether the petition of a city to be admitted to the privileges of Roman citizens should be granted, or whether some concession should be made to a suppliant king;—these, with the exception of the debates on the Catiline conspiracy, and one or two of the Philippics, form the subjects of a public nature, on which the mighty genius and consummate art of Cicero were bestowed. We are not, therefore, surprised to find that those of his orations, in which he bears the best comparison with his rival De-

more nearly approaching public questions, as, the speech against Midias, which relates to an assault on the speaker, but excels in spirit and vehemence perhaps all his other efforts; and some which, though personal, involve high considerations of public policy, as that most beautiful and energetic speech against Aristocrates; but we have all his immortal orations upon the state affairs of Greece—the *Περὶ Στεφάνου*, embracing the history of a twenty years' administration during the most critical period of Grecian story; and the *Philippics*, discussing every question of foreign policy, and of the stand to be made by the civilized world against the encroachments of the barbarians. Those speeches were delivered upon subjects the most important and affecting that could be conceived to the whole communi-

mosthenes, were delivered in the forum in private causes. In some of these may be found examples of perhaps the very highest perfection to which the art can be carried, of clear, acute, convincing argument, of strong natural feeling, and of sudden bursts of passion; always, however, restrained by the predominating influence of a highly cultivated art—an art little concealed."

ty ; the topics handled in them were of universal application and of perpetual interest. To introduce a general observation the Latin orator must quit the immediate course of his argument ; he must for the moment lose sight of the object in view. But the Athenian can hardly hold too lofty a tone, or carry his view too extensively over the map of human affairs, for the vast range of his subject—the fates of the whole commonwealth of Greece, and the stand to be made by free and polished nations against barbaric tyrants.

After forming and chastening the taste by a diligent study of those perfect models, it is necessary to acquire correct habits of composition in our own language, first by studying the best writers, and next by translating copiously into it from the Greek. This is by far the best exercise that I am acquainted with for at once attaining a pure English diction, and avoiding the tameness and regularity of modern composition. But the English writers who really unlock the rich sources of the language, are those who

flourished from the end of Elizabeth's to the end of Queen Anne's reign; who used a good Saxon dialect with ease, but correctness and perspicuity,—learned in the ancient classics, but only enriching their mother tongue where the Attic could supply its defects,—not overlaying it with a profuse pedantic coinage of foreign words,—well practised in the old rules of composition or rather collocation (σύνθεσις) which unite natural ease and variety with absolute harmony, and give the author's ideas to develop themselves with the more truth and simplicity when clothed in the ample folds of inversion, or run from the exuberant to the elliptical without ever being either redundant or obscure. Those great wits had no foreknowledge of such times as succeeded their brilliant age, when styles should arise, and for a season prevail over both purity, and nature, and antique recollections—now meretriciously ornamented, more than half French in the phrase, and to mere figures fantastically sacrificing the sense—now heavily and regularly fashioned as if by the plumb and rule,

and by the eye rather than the ear, with a needless profusion of ancient words and flexions, to displace those of our own Saxon, instead of temperately supplying its defects. Least of all could those lights of English eloquence have imagined that men should appear amongst us professing to teach composition, and ignorant of the whole of its rules, and incapable of relishing the beauties, or indeed apprehending the very genius of the language, should treat its peculiar ^{turns} terms of expression and flexion, as so many inaccuracies, and practise their pupils in correcting the faulty English of Addison, and training down to the mechanical rhythm of Johnson the lively and inimitable measures of Bolingbroke.

But in exhorting you deeply to meditate on the beauties of our old English authors, the poets, the moralists, and perhaps more than all these the preachers of the Augustan age of English letters, do not imagine that I would pass over their great defects when compared with the renowned standards of severe taste in ancient

times. Addison may have been pure and elegant ; Dryden airy and nervous ; Taylor witty and fanciful ; Hooker weighty and various ; but none of them united force with beauty—the perfection of matter with the most refined and chastened style ; and to one charge all, even the most faultless, are exposed—the offence unknown in ancient times, but the besetting sin of later days—they always overdid—never knowing or feeling when they had done enough. In nothing, not even in beauty of collocation and harmony of rhythm, is the vast superiority of the chaste, vigorous, manly style of the Greek orators and writers more conspicuous than in the abstinent use of their prodigious faculties of expression. A single phrase—sometimes a word—and the work is done—the desired impression is made, as it were, with one stroke, there being nothing superfluous interposed to weaken the blow, or break its fall. The commanding idea is singled out ; it is made to stand forward ; all auxiliaries are rejected ; as the Emperor Napoleon selected one point in the heart of his ad-

versary's strength, and brought all his power to bear upon that, careless of the other points which he was sure to carry if he won the centre, as sure to have carried in vain if he left the centre unsubdued. Far otherwise do modern writers make their onset ; they resemble rather those campaigners who fit out twenty little expeditions at a time, to be a laughing stock if they fail, and useless if they succeed ; or if they do attack in the right place, so divide their forces, from the dread of leaving any one point unassailed, that they can make no sensible impression where alone it avails them to be felt. It seems the principle of such authors never to leave any thing unsaid that can be said on any one topic ; to run down every idea they start ; to let nothing pass ; and leave nothing to the reader, but harass him with anticipating every thing that could possibly strike his mind. Compare with this effeminate laxity of speech, the manly severity of ancient eloquence ; or of him who approached it, by the happy union of natural genius with learned meditation ; or of him

who so marvellously approached still nearer with only the familiar knowledge of its least perfect ensamples. Mark, I do beseech you, the severe simplicity, the subdued tone of the diction, in the most touching parts of the “old man Eloquent’s” loftiest passages. In the oath, when he comes to the burial place where they repose by whom he is swearing, if ever a grand epithet were allowable, it is here—yet the only one he applies is ἀγαθούς — μὰ τοὺς ἐν Μαραθῶνι προκινδυνεύσαντας τῶν προγόνων — καὶ τοὺς ἐν Πλαταιαῖς παραταξαμένους — καὶ τοὺς ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχήσαντας — καὶ τοὺς ἐπ’ Ἀρτεμισίῳ, καὶ πολλοὺς ἑτέρους τοὺς ἐν τοῖς δημοσίοις μνήμασι κειμένους ἈΓΑΘΟΥΣ ἄνδρας. When he would compare the effects of the Theban treaty in dispelling the dangers that compassed the state round about, to the swift passing away of a stormy cloud, he satisfies himself with two words, ὥσπερ νέφος—the theme of just admiration to succeeding ages; and when he would paint the sudden approach of overwhelming peril to beset the state, he does it by a stroke the picturesque effect of which has not perhaps

been enough noted—likening it to a whirlwind or a winter torrent, ὥσπερ σκηπτὸς ἢ χειμάρρους. It is worthy of remark, that in by far the first of all Mr. Burke's orations, the passage which is, I believe, universally allowed to be the most striking, owes its effect to a figure twice introduced in close resemblance to these two great expressions, although certainly not in imitation of either ; for the original is to be found in Livy's description of Fabius's appearance to Hannibal. Hyder's vengeance is likened to “a
 “ black cloud, that hung for a while on the de-
 “ clivities of the mountains,” and the people who suffered under its devastations, are described as “enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry.” Whoever reads the whole passage, will, I think, admit that the effect is almost entirely produced by those two strokes ; that the amplifications which accompany them, as the “blackening of the ho-
 “ rizon”—the “menacing meteor”—the “storm
 “ of unusual fire,” rather disarm than augment the terrors of the original *black cloud* ; and that the “goads of the drivers,” and “the

“trampling of pursuing horses,” somewhat abate the fury of the *whirlwind of cavalry*.—Δουλεύουσίν γε μαστιγούμενοι καὶ στρεβλούμενοι, says the Grecian master, to describe the wretched lot of those who had yielded to the wiles of the conqueror, in the vain hope of securing their liberties in safety. Compare this with the choicest of Mr. Burke’s invectives of derision and pity upon the same subject—the sufferings of those who made peace with Regicide France—and acknowledge the mighty effect of relying upon a single stroke to produce a great effect—if you have the master hand to give it. “The king of Prussia has hypothecated
 “in trust to the Regicides his rich and fertile
 “territories on the Rhine, as a pledge of his zeal
 “and affection to the cause of liberty and equality. He has been robbed with unbounded liberty and with the most levelling equality. The
 “woods are wasted; the country is ravaged;
 “property is confiscated; and the people are
 “put to bear a double yoke, in the exactions of
 “a tyrannical government, and in the contributions of a hostile conscription.” “The grand

“ duke of Tuscany, for his early sincerity, for
 “ his love of peace, and for his entire confidence
 “ in the amity of the assassins of his family, has
 “ been complimented with the name of the
 “ ‘*wisest sovereign in Europe.*’ This pacific
 “ Solomon, or his philosophic cudgelled minis-
 “ try, cudgelled by English and by French,
 “ whose wisdom and philosophy between them
 “ have placed Leghorn in the hands of the ene-
 “ my of the Austrian family, and driven the
 “ only profitable commerce of Tuscany from its
 “ only port.”—Turn now for refreshment to the

Athenian artist—Καλὴν γὰρ οἱ πολλοὶ νῦν ἀπειλήφασιν
 Ὀρειτῶν χάριν, ὅτι τοῖς Φιλίππου φίλοις ἐπέτρεψαν
 αὐτούς, τὸν δ' Εὐφραῖον ἐάθουν· καλὴν γὰρ ὁ δῆμος ὁ τῶν
 Ἐρετρίων, ὅτι τοὺς ὑμετέροους μὲν πρέσβεις ἀπήλασε,
 Κλειτάρχῳ δ' ἐνέδωκεν αὐτόν· δουλεύουσί γε μαστιγού-
 μενοι καὶ στρεβλούμενοι. Phil. 3.—Upon some very

rare occasions indeed, the orator, not content
 with a single blow, pours himself all forth in a
 full torrent of invective, and then we recognise
 the man who was said of old to eat shields and

steel—~~ἀσπίδας καὶ σιδήρεον φαγών~~ But still the

καταπιπτάς τας τε λογχάς εσθίων
 αἰών

effect is produced without repetition or diffuseness. I am not aware of any such expanded passage as the invective in the *Περὶ Στεφάνου* against those who had betrayed the various states of Greece to Philip. It is indeed a noble passage; one of the most brilliant, perhaps the most highly coloured, of any in Demosthenes; but it is as condensed and rapid as it is rich and varied.—

"*Ἀνθρώποι μισαροὶ καὶ κόλακες καὶ ἀλάστορες, ἡκρωτηρισμένοι τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἑκάστοι πατρίδας, τὴν ἐλευθερίαν προπεπωκότες πρότερον μὲν Φιλίππῳ, νῦν δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ — τῇ γαστρὶ μετροῦντες καὶ τοῖς αἰσχίστοις τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν — τὴν δ' ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τὸ μηδένᾳ ἔχειν δεσπότην αὐτῶν, (ὧς τοῖς προτέροις Ἑλλησιν ὄροι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἦσαν καὶ κανόνες) ἀνατετροφότες**.—This requires no contrast to make its merit shine forth; but compare it with

* The object of chief abhorrence to the old Greeks is remarkably expressed in this passage—*δεσπότης* is the correlative of *δοῦλος*—and the meaning of *δεσπότην ἔχειν αὐτῶν* is, "having an owner or proprietor of themselves," that is, "being the property, the chattels of any one,"—and this they justly deemed the last of human miseries. The addition of the cart-whip, and a tropical climate, would not probably have been esteemed an alleviation of the lot of slavery.

any of Cicero's invectives—that, for instance, in the third Catilinarian, against the conspirators, where he attacks them regularly under six different heads, and in above twenty times as many words; and ends with the known and very moderate jest of their commander keeping “*Scortorum cohortem Prætoriam.*”

The great poet of modern Italy, Dante,* ap-

* This great poet abounds in such master strokes. To give only a few examples. The flight of doves :

Con l' ali aperte e ferme al dolce nido
Volan per l'äer, dal voler portate.—(Inf. v.)

The gnawing of a skull by a mortal enemy :

Co' denti
Che furo all' osso, come d'un can, forti.—(Inf. xxxiii.)

The venality and simoniacal practices of the Romish church :

Là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca.—(Parad. xvii.)

The perfidy of a Bourbon :

Senz' arme n'esce, e solo con la lancia
Con la qual giostrò Giuda.—(Purg. xx.)

The pains of dependance :

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com' è duro calle
Lo scendere e'l salir per l' altrui scale.—(Parad. xvii.)

proached nearest to the ancients in the quality of which I have been speaking. In his finest passages you rarely find an epithet; hardly ever more than one; and never two efforts to embody one idea. “*A guisa di Leon quando si posa,*” is the single trait by which he compares the dignified air of a stern personage to the expression of the lion slowly laying him down. It is remarkable that Tasso copies the verse entire, but he destroys its whole effect by filling up the majestic idea, adding this line, “*Girando gli occhi e non movendo il passo.*” A better illustration could not easily be found of the difference between the ancient and the modern style. Another is furnished by a later imitator of the same great master. I know no passage of the *Divina Commedia*, more excursive than the description of evening in the Purgatorio; yet the poet is content with somewhat enlarging on a single thought—the tender recollections which that hour of meditation gives the traveller, at the fall of the first night he is to pass away from home, when he hears the distant knell of the expiring day. Gray adopts the

idea of the knell in nearly the words of the original, and adds eight other circumstances to it, presenting a kind of ground plan, or at least a catalogue, an accurate enumeration (like a natural historian's,) of every one particular belonging to night-fall, so as wholly to exhaust the subject, and leave nothing to the imagination of the reader. Dante's six verses, too, have but one epithet, *dolci*, applied to *amici*. Gray has thirteen or fourteen; some of them mere repetitions of the same idea which the verb or the substantive conveys—as *drowsy tinkling lulls*,—the *moping owl complains*,—the ploughman *plods* his *wearry* way. Surely when we contrast the simple and commanding majesty of the ancient writers, with the superabundance and diffusion of the exhaustive method, we may be tempted to feel that there lurks some alloy of bitterness in the excess of sweets. This was so fully recognized by the wise ancients, that it became a proverb among them, as we learn from an epigram still preserved,

Εἰς τὴν μετριότητα.

Πᾶν τὸ περιττὸν ἄκαιρον, ἐπεὶ λόγος ἐστὶ παλαιὸς,
καὶ τοῦ μέλιτος, τὸ πλεον ἐστὶ χολή.

In forming the taste by much contemplation of those antique models, and acquiring the habits of easy and chaste composition, it must not be imagined that all the labour of the orator is ended, or that he may then dauntless and fluent enter upon his office in the public assembly. Much preparation is still required before each exertion, if rhetorical excellence is aimed at. I should lay it down as a rule, admitting of no exception, that a man will speak well in proportion as he has written much; and that with equal talents, he will be the finest extempore speaker, when no time for preparing is allowed, who has prepared himself the most sedulously when he had an opportunity of delivering a premeditated speech. All the exceptions which I have ever heard cited to this principle, are apparent ones only; proving nothing more than that some few men, of rare genius, have become great speakers

without preparation ; in nowise showing, that with preparation they would not have reached a much higher pitch of excellence. The admitted superiority of the ancients in all oratorical accomplishments, is the best proof of my position ; for their careful preparation is undeniable ; nay, in Demosthenes (of whom Quintilian says, that his style indicates more premeditation—*plus curæ*—than Cicero's,) we can trace, by the recurrence of the same passage, with progressive improvements in different speeches, how nicely he polished the more exquisite parts of his compositions. I could point out favourite passages, occurring as often as three several times with variations, and manifest amendment.

I am now requiring, not merely great preparation while the speaker is learning his art, but after he has accomplished his education. The most splendid effort of the most mature orator will be always finer for being previously elaborated with much care. There is, no doubt, a charm in extemporaneous elocution, derived from the

appearance of artless unpremeditated effusion, called forth by the occasion, and so adapting itself to its exigences, which may compensate the manifold defects incident to this kind of composition : that which is inspired by the unforeseen circumstances of the moment, will be of necessity suited to those circumstances in the choice of the topics, and pitched in the tone of the execution to the feelings upon which it is to operate. These are great virtues : it is another to avoid the besetting vice of modern oratory—the overdoing every thing—the exhaustive method—which an offhand speaker has no time to fall into, and he accordingly will take only the grand and effective view : nevertheless, in oratorical merit, such effusions must needs be very inferior ; much of the pleasure they produce depends upon the hearer's surprise, that in such circumstances any thing can be delivered at all, rather than upon his deliberate judgment, that he has heard any thing very excellent in itself. We may rest assured that the highest reaches of the art, and without any necessary sacrifice of natural effect, can only

be attained by him who well considers, and maturely prepares, and often-times sedulously corrects and refines his oration. Such preparation is quite consistent with the introduction of passages prompted by the occasion ; nor will the transition from the one to the other be perceptible in the execution of a practised master. I have known attentive and skilful hearers completely deceived in this matter, and taking for extemporaneous, passages which previously existed in manuscript, and were pronounced without the variation of a particle or a pause. Thus, too, we are told by Cicero in one of his epistles, that having to make, in Pompey's presence, a speech after Crassus had very unexpectedly taken a particular line of argument, he exerted himself, and it appears successfully, in a marvellous manner, mightily assisted, in what he said extempore, by his habit of rhetorical preparation, and introducing skilfully, as the inspiration of the moment, all his favourite common places, with some of which, as we gather from a good humoured joke at his own expense, Crassus had interfered : “ Ego autem ip-

se, Di Boni ! quomodo ἐνεπερπερευσάμην novo auditori Pompeio ! Si unquam mihi περίοδοι, si καμπαί, si ἐνθυμήματα, si κατασκευαί, supeditaverunt, illo tempore. Quid multa ? clamores.—Etenim hæc erat ὑπόθεσις, de gravitate ordinis, de equestri concordia, de consensione Italiae, de immortalis reliquii conjurationis, de vilitate, de otio—nôsti jam in hâc materiâ sonitus nostros ; tanti fuerunt ut ego eo brevior sim, quod eos usque isthinc exauditos putem.” (Ad Att. I. 14.)

If, from contemplating the means of acquiring eloquence, we turn to the noble purposes to which it may be made subservient, we at once perceive its prodigious importance to the best interests of mankind. The greatest masters of the art have concurred, and upon the greatest occasion of its display, in pronouncing that its estimation depends on the virtuous and rational use made of it. Let their sentiments be engraved on your memory in their own pure and appropriate diction. Καλὸν (says Æschines) τὴν μὲν διάνοιαν προαιρεῖσθαι τὰ βέλτιστα, τὴν δὲ παιδείαν

τὴν τοῦ ῥήτορος καὶ τὸν λόγον πείθειν τοὺς ἀκούοντας —
 εἰ δὲ μὴ, τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνην αἰεὶ προτακτέον τοῦ λόγου —
 (Κατὰ Κτησιφῶντος). "Ἔστι (says his illustrious an-
 tagonist) δ' οὐχ ὁ λόγος τοῦ ῥήτορος τίμιος, οὐδ' ὁ τόπος
 τῆς φωνῆς, ἀλλὰ τὸ ταῦτά προαιρεῖσθαι τοῖς πολλοῖς —
 (Ὑπὲρ Κτησ.)

It is but reciting the ordinary praises of the art of persuasion, to remind you how sacred truths may be most ^{impressively} ~~ardently~~ promulgated at the altar—the cause of oppressed innocence be most powerfully defended—the march of wicked rulers be most triumphantly resisted—defiance the most terrible be hurled at the oppressor's head. In great convulsions of public affairs, or in bringing about salutary changes, every one confesses how important an ally eloquence must be. But in peaceful times, when the progress of events is slow and even as the silent and unheeded pace of time, and the jars of a mighty tumult in foreign and domestic concerns can no longer be heard, then too she flourishes,—protectress of liberty,—patroness of improvement,

—guardian of all the blessings that can be showered upon the mass of human kind ; nor is her form ever seen but on ground consecrated to free institutions. “ *Pacis comes, otique socia, et jam bene constitutæ reipublicæ alumna eloquentia.*” To me, calmly revolving these things, such pursuits seem far more noble objects of ambition than any upon which the vulgar herd of busy men lavish prodigal their restless exertions. To diffuse useful information,—to further intellectual refinement, sure forerunner of moral improvement,—to hasten the coming of that bright day when the dawn of general knowledge shall chase away the lazy, lingering mists, even from the base of the great social pyramid ;—this indeed is a high calling, in which the most splendid talents and consummate virtue may well press onward, eager to bear a part. I know that I speak in a place consecrated by the pious wisdom of ancient times to the instruction of but a select portion of the community. Yet from this classic ground have gone forth those whose genius, not their ancestry, ennobled

them ; whose incredible merits have opened to all ranks the temple of science ; whose illustrious example has made the humblest emulous to climb steeps no longer inaccessible, and enter the unfolded gates, burning in the sun. I speak in that city where Black having once taught, and Watt learned, the grand experiment was afterwards made in our day, and with entire success, to demonstrate that the highest intellectual cultivation is perfectly compatible with the daily cares and toils of working men ; to show by thousands of living examples that a keen relish for the most sublime truths of science belongs alike to every class of mankind.

To promote this, of all objects the most important, men of talents and of influence I rejoice to behold pressing forward in every part of the empire ; but I wait with impatient anxiety to see the same course pursued by men of high station in society, and by men of rank in the world of letters. It should seem as if these felt some little lurking jealousy, and those were

somewhat scared by feelings of alarm—the one and the other surely alike groundless. No man of science needs fear to see the day when scientific excellence shall be too vulgar a commodity to bear a high price. The more widely knowledge is spread, the more will they be prized whose happy lot it is to extend its bounds by discovering new truths, or multiply its uses by inventing new modes of applying it in practice. Their numbers will indeed be increased, and among them more Watts and more Franklins will be enrolled among the lights of the world, in proportion as more thousands of the working classes, to which Franklin and Watt belonged, have their thoughts turned towards philosophy; but the order of discoverers and inventors will still be a select few, and the only material variation in their proportion to the bulk of mankind will be, that the mass of the ignorant multitude being progressively diminished, the body of those will be incalculably increased who are worthy to admire genius, and able to bestow upon its possessors an immortal fame.

To those, too, who feel alarmed as statesmen, and friends of existing establishments, I would address a few words of comfort. Real knowledge never promoted either turbulence or unbelief; but its progress is the forerunner of liberality and enlightened toleration. Whoso dreads these, let him tremble; for he may be well assured that their day is at length come and must put to sudden flight the evil spirits of tyranny and persecution, which haunted the long night now gone down the sky. As men will no longer suffer themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance, so will they no more yield to the vile principle of judging and treating their fellow creatures, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions. The Great Truth has finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth, THAT MAN SHALL NO MORE RENDER ACCOUNT TO MAN FOR HIS BELIEF, OVER WHICH HE HAS HIMSELF NO CONTROL. Henceforward, nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or to blame any one for that which he can no more change

than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature. Henceforward, treating with entire respect those who conscientiously differ from ourselves, the only practical effect of the difference will be, to make us enlighten the ignorance on one side or the other from which it springs, by instructing them, if it be theirs; ourselves, if it be our own, to the end that the only kind of unanimity may be produced which is desirable among rational beings—the agreement proceeding from full conviction after the freest discussion. Far then, very far, from the universal spread of knowledge being the object of just apprehension to those who watch over the peace of the country, or have a deep interest in the permanence of her institutions, its sure effect will be the removal of the only dangers that threaten the public tranquillity, and the addition of all that is wanting to confirm her internal strength.

Let me therefore indulge in the hope, that, among the illustrious youths whom this ancient kingdom, famed alike for its nobility and its

learning, has produced, to continue her fame through after ages, possibly among those I now address, there may be found some one—I ask no more—willing to give a bright example to other nations in a path yet untrodden, by taking the lead of his fellow citizens,—not in frivolous amusements, nor in the degrading pursuits of the ambitious vulgar,—but in the truly noble task of enlightening the mass of his countrymen, and of leaving his own name no longer encircled, as heretofore, with barbaric splendour, or attached to courtly gewgaws, but illustrated by the honours most worthy of our rational nature—coupled with the diffusion of knowledge—and gratefully pronounced through all ages by millions whom his wise beneficence has rescued from ignorance and vice. To him I will say, “*Homines ad Deos nullâ re propius accedunt quam salutem hominibus dando : nihil habet nec fortuna tua majus quam ut possis, nec natura tua melius quam ut velis servare quamplurimos.*” This is the true mark for the aim of all who either prize the enjoy-

ment of pure happiness, or set a right value upon a high and unsullied renown.—And if the benefactors of mankind, when they rest from their pious labours, shall be permitted to enjoy hereafter, as an appropriate reward of their virtue, the privilege of looking down upon the blessings with which their toils and sufferings have clothed the scene of their former existence ; do not vainly imagine that, in a state of exalted purity and wisdom, the founders of mighty dynasties, the conquerors of ^{vast} ~~new~~ empires, or the more vulgar crowd of evil-doers, who have sacrificed to their own aggrandisement the good of their fellow-creatures, will be gratified by contemplating the monuments of their inglorious fame :—theirs will be the delight—theirs the triumph—who can trace the remote effects of their enlightened benevolence in the improved condition of their species, and exult in the reflection, that the prodigious change they now survey, with eyes that age and sorrow can make dim no more—of knowledge become power—virtue sharing in the dominion—superstition trampled under foot—tyranny

driven from the world—are the fruits, precious, though costly, and though late reaped, yet long enduring, of all the hardships and all the hazards they encountered here below !

THE END.

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